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THE RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES WITH THE LATIN-AMERICAN REPUBLICS

By Leopold Grahame, formerly editor of "The Buenos Aires Herald" and of "The Argentine Year Book"

To discuss the "Relations of the United States with the Latin-American Republics" without dealing with the conditions and policies which govern them, would be merely to re-affirm the noble and elevated sentiments expressed by the acts and declarations of the illustrious Presidents of the United States, from James Monroe down to the present eminently distinguished incumbent of that exalted office.

The relations of the United States with the Latin republics of the American continent, are based upon a mutual sympathy for those liberty-loving principles, essential to the greatness of any modern nation. It is a fundamental error to suppose that friendship with one nation implies the estrangement of another. The specific character of international relations differs according to the traditions and antecedents of the people and to the more material factors in their intercourse. The Latin republics, whilst indebted to a heroic generation of their own race for their emancipation from the yoke of colonial serfdom, owe the firm establishment and maintenance of their justly-claimed independence to the sympathies and active support of the people and early governments of the United States who initiated the policy which has made this country the champion of sovereign rights throughout the American continent and the guide of the younger nations in the evolution of their political conceptions and aspirations.

Those nations recognize with gratitude the help thus extended to them in their struggles for freedom and organic constitution; and they also recognize that in safeguarding

American independence from possible foreign foes, the United States has never encroached upon their individual liberty. Therefore, all the antecedents and all the traditions impel a sincere desire on their part for the development of American union, by harmony of thought and of action with the great representative of continental integrity. These are the links of gratitude which form the relations of the south with their elder sister of the north.

The reciprocal relations are to be found in the similarity of conditions which gave birth to all the nations of America and led to the attainment of the proud position they occupy today in the world's affairs. So, as the United States had to conquer savage Indians, to suffer war, and to endure misery and great sacrifices in the effort to develop the resources of vast uninhabited territories and to establish the principles of liberty and justice, many of the Latin nations of America have successfully overcome the same difficulties and today are inviting the rest of the world to add to their developments and to share their wealth. These are the sources whence have sprung the friendship and sympathy of the United States for those ardent democracies. It is that touch of human nature which makes us all kin. It is that inborn sentiment of admiration for high and just ideals which arouses in the minds of educated Englishmen of the present time, a reverential respect for the memory of the great men who framed and signed the Declaration of American Independence. It is the same spirit which inspires Spain to delight in the triumph of her truant children across the seas and in the magic awakening of Ibero-America. It is the conquest of the arts of peace and of true civilization over the feudalism and barbarism of the past. It is the worship of the Statue of Liberty gazing out from every harbour of the American continent; and it is upon the foundation of sympathy and friendship arising out of that lofty conception of true democracy, that American unity is being built up and the relations of all the American countries defined and maintained.

It has been urged that the phenomenal progress of the greater countries of South America has merged this senti-

mental view into more practical considerations; but those who are acquainted with enlightened public opinion in Latin America, regard the suggestion as devoid of all real foundation. The nations of the new continent should not and will not forget that from Great Britain they have received the bulk of the capital which has given vitality to their currents of commerce and industry; and that from other European countries they have secured the laborers to sow and reap their abundant harvests; but these conditions in no way impede an extension of friendly relations with the United States, looking towards further progress, increased trade, and a policy whereby to consolidate the destinies of all the American nations.

The causes which have chiefly operated to restrict the social and commercial intercourse of the southern countries with the United States, are the difficulties of distance and the lack of direct means of communication, but, above all, a mutual want of knowledge of the conditions, of the desires, and of the widely divergent racial characteristics of the people respectively inhabiting the two divisions of the continent. It is this ignorance of essential conditions, prevailing throughout America, that has led to international misunderstandings, to misconceptions and to doubts and suspicions, which have militated against an extension of commercial and friendly relations, so necessary to the welfare of the entire continent. If that not inconsiderable number of people in the United States who associate the term "South America" with all the elements of disorder and dishonesty; and those people of Latin America who regard the policy of the United States as being dictated by the ultimate purpose of territorial conquest and other selfish objects, were to examine the records of history and the actually existing circumstances, there would be a change of conditions that would give to the word "America" an interpretation signifying the highest ideals of justice, of peace, and of progress.

Warm-hearted, impulsive, and eager for political emancipation, the Latin-American people have invariably subordinated material advantage to social and intellectual

development; and if, through the initial error, in some cases, of implanting laws and institutions in advance of their times, turbulent political conditions were produced during anxious periods of their national formation, their latter-day progress in every field of human activity demonstrates their capacity for self-government and the possession of those rare qualities which make for national greatness in the fullest sense of those words. The basic conditions of all the Latin republics are identical; and the solid advance which has been made by Argentina, Brazil and Chile, will assuredly be repeated in the republics of lesser importance, in a degree corresponding to their opportunities, their geographical situation and the extent of their resources. All of those countries have suffered and have had their national forces weakened by the many uprisings which followed their liberation; but most of them have realized the necessity for discarding their factional colors; and, under a common flag, to unite in diverting their energies from revolutionary activity, to the more beneficial course of developing their national industries, of advancing their intellectual movements, and of directing their legislation towards securing freedom and the highest form of protection for the interests of those who inhabit their territories. The people of those lands are now dedicating their efforts to objects which exalt the human mind and give high rank to nations. They cherish the principles of liberty, within the limits of order, and they are striving for continued progress under constitutional and honest governments.

Practically, all their constitutions are modelled upon the lines of the magnificent instrument which has made this country great and free; and, I need only point to the first provision of the national Constitution of the Argentine Republic, to show the breadth of the principles upon which the sovereignty of that country was founded. Its primary objects are declared to be:

to create national unity, to consolidate justice and internal peace, to provide for the common defence, to promote the general welfare; and to assure the benefits of liberty to us, to our descendants and to all the people of the world who may reside in Argentine territory.

Nor is this charter of the people's rights and liberty a mere matter of theory. The principles it embodies have been carried into practice in every form of legislation. In that republic, as in others of Latin America, there is absolute civil and religious freedom; there are no restrictions upon healthy immigration, or upon the nationality of land-owners. The naturalization laws are liberal enough to enable foreigners of merit to hold official positions without regard to the customary residential qualifications; the patriotic and other national celebrations of the inhabitants of foreign birth, are respected, and even participated in, by the sons of the soil; and, side by side with this remarkable development of free institutions, there is an earnest and deeply-rooted desire that whilst internal peace is being thus consolidated, there should be no causes for suspicion, or international conflicts amongst the American nations.

All the people of Latin America regard as paramount to every other consideration, the integrity of their national territory and their complete independence; and, influenced by those sentiments, it is hardly surprising that they should have misunderstood the motives underlying the occasional exercise of vigorous diplomatic action on the part of the United States in her past relations with some of the less-advanced countries of Latin America. Recent events have shown, beyond question, that the true policy of the United States in regard to the Latin nations of America, is to assist in their peaceful and progressive development, without encroachment upon their sovereignty or upon their independence; but it must be remembered that the most valued interests of this country would be imperilled by a condition of chronic disturbance within the borders of some of its neighbors.

American action in Cuba, demonstrates that the acquisition, by conquest, of the territory of any of the Latin republics, is repellent to the principles of the clearly defined attitude of the United States towards the southern countries. The policies of Rush, of Henry Clay, of Monroe, of Lincoln, of Blaine, and of other great apostles of American liberty, are being continued today by all the recognized leaders

of American thought. For the first time in the history of the United States, that great man, Elihu Root, laid aside his important duties as secretary of state, to preach the gospel of Pan-Americanism throughout Latin America. His distinguished successor, Williams Jennings Bryan, inspired by similar motives, traveled through thousands of miles of the continent to assure the Ibero-Americans of the friendly sympathy of the great republic of the north with their legitimate aspirations. That eminent citizen, ex-President Roosevelt, is, at the present moment, devoting his labors and his energy to the self-imposed task of assisting the international union which is the hope of all good Americans; and to this brilliant roll there must now be added the honored name of the present illustrious chief executive of the United States, President Wilson. Only a few days ago, that faithful servant of the people, speaking with all the responsibility of his position and with all the sincerity which marks his every utterance, declared the policy of his administration, in relation to the republics of the western hemisphere, to be one of morality and justice, against political or financial expediency. That declaration of the President whose disregard of material advantage for the enforcement of high-minded principles, will add lustre and prestige to the name of the United States in the council of nations, should be printed in letters of gold throughout the American continent.

In the definition of the policy so expressed, President Wilson wisely added to his references to the sister-republics the statement, that

We must prove ourselves their friends and champions upon terms of equality and honor. You cannot be friends upon any other terms than upon the terms of equality.

That is the key-note of the whole situation. The cultured and sensitive Latin mind resents condescension, domination, or, the suggestion of inequality. Prior to Senator Root's visit to South America, in 1906, there existed a very wide distrust of American policy which was intensified by international rivalries and by the belief, in the

Argentine Republic, arising out of press misrepresentations, that the United States had designs, as the result of a supposed diplomatic alliance with Brazil, to establish a hegemony in that part of the continent. Fortunately, the eloquent and frank declarations of the state secretary to the effect that the United States was actuated by the sole purpose of promoting the friendly intercourse of all the American republics; and that anything in the nature of an alliance was opposed to the policy and traditions of his country, produced an entire revulsion of feeling and cemented the bonds of that friendship, which has been so beautifully manifested during Colonel Roosevelt's recent visit to that favored land. Such incidents point clearly to the conclusion that every serious rupture that has disturbed the friendly relations of the United States with the other republics, has been due to ignorance of actual conditions, or, to a distortion of the real facts of the case.

The United States has two spheres of action in Latin America, diplomatic and commercial; and, in this connection, I would refer to a matter which I regard as of the highest importance to a satisfactory fulfilment of those missions. With a natural desire to enjoy fitting and dignified representation in the capitals of Europe, the United States has entrusted its principal embassies to the care of a long succession of brilliant men who have worthily represented the interests and maintained the traditions of this great country; but, without detracting from the high character and qualifications of the many distinguished citizens to whom have been confined the diplomatic missions to the smaller countries of Latin America, it may be said to have become a custom to regard such appointments as altogether of minor importance. May I be permitted to suggest that the services of the great diplomats of the United States are more needed in the capitals of some of the republics of Central and South America, than in London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Madrid, or St. Petersburg? It is not complimentary to the countries which have sent to Washington such distinguished diplomats and international jurists, as Nabuco, Quesada, Garcia Merou, Da

Gama, Naon, and others, that the mere suggestion that men of the type of Joseph H. Choate, John Hay, James Russell Lowell, Whitelaw Reid, or David Jayne Hill, should be sent to represent their country in the South American republics, would be popularly regarded as ridiculous.

There are many other factors to be considered in the relations of the United States with the sister republics; and one of the most important of these is the approaching opening of the Panama Canal. The operation of that colossal monument to American enterprise, will bridge the distance and remove the necessity for the circuitous routes of travel which now separate the north from the south; and will produce an active interchange of visits that will bring the people of the two races into closer touch, with the result that their better mutual knowledge and understanding of character and conditions will lend to increased association and friendship. For that reason alone, it is imperatively demanded that peace and order should be established in all the countries adjacent to the Canal Zone. That condition of affairs is indispensable to the welfare of every part of the continent. Today, all countries must conform to the higher order of civilization imposed upon them by the exigencies of universal peace and good will. The minor republics of the American continent have many beautiful examples to follow; and for these they have only to look to Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, whose great achievements in every phase of national effort and duty have evoked the admiration of the world at large. In a corresponding degree it is the duty of those less fortunately situated, to enter upon the same forward march, in order that they may attain the position to which their traditions and their resources entitle them.

It is a happy augury for the future that the sentiment of American union is gradually deposing the spirit of imperialism which, in latter years, has found favor with a small section of the American people. It is a still happier augury that increasing interest in the establishment of good relations with Latin America, is being promoted by such distinguished men as those present here today and by such

institutions as this great university. This illuminating conference constitutes a combination of enlightenment and justice; and it has afforded me deep gratification to participate in the furtherance of its noble aims and objects which cannot fail to be productive of beneficial results to the cause of Pan-Americanism. The influential representation of the Pan-American Union, at this gathering, affords proof of the importance and worthiness of the occasion; and I feel sure that in offering a tribute of admiration to the magnificent services of its Director-General, John Barrett—the friend and ambassador of Latin America—and of its Assistant Director, Senor Yánès, in the propagation of the true doctrine, I am but re-echoing the sentiments of all my distinguished fellow-guests from different parts of the continent. Through the Archipelago of the Antilles, through the States of Central America, from the Rio Grande to the Straits of Magellan, and from Punta Arenas to the most eastern extension of South America, there will be a profound appreciation of the efforts of Clark University to strengthen and bind in friendly union all the nations of America.